

Happy Birthday, Völkerrechtsblog!

Völkerrechtsblog

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Today exactly five years ago, our [first post](#) went online. To celebrate a birthday with a blog means to celebrate what fills the blog with life: its articles, its authors, its readers, its commentators – and not least the whole editing team whose dedicated work makes *Völkerrechtsblog* possible. We are extremely happy about how the blog has evolved over the last years. It started off as a small project run by a small group of people and has been growing ever since. In particular the number of readers and authors from all around the globe is growing continuously: Last year, our readership almost doubled, to roughly 61,000 unique visitors per year. Our statistics show that there is almost no country on the world where *Völkerrechtsblog* is not read! Our readership is growing, our editing team, too (read below) and we are eager to pursue new ideas. In all these endeavors, we are grateful that starting this year, *Völkerrechtsblog* [receives funding](#) by [Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft](#) (DFG), the German national research funding organization, for a period of three years. Five years behind us and hopefully many more ahead!

Towards a more international international law scholarship

We are thrilled about the developments, and one thing we note with particular joy is that in recent months, we are receiving an increasing number of contributions by scholars from outside Europa and North-America, lately many from India (check out posts for instance [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). We strongly believe that the academic discourse in international law still needs to become more diverse and has to include voices from all world regions. We understand the open access format of blogs to be one element that enables this diversification – by avoiding obstacles and allowing for a more immediate exchange. Much remains to be done, and it is our hope that *Völkerrechtsblog* can contribute to working towards a more open and truly global international law discourse.

More and merrier

For the future, we plan use our resources to extending collaborations and networks in general, and especially to further open up the discursive space towards the Global South. In terms of content, we are particularly interested in unconventional and critical perspectives on international law. This includes the so-called TWAIL (Third World approaches to international law) and postcolonial critiques (start reading for instance [here](#)), feminist perspectives (cf. [here](#)), critical race perspectives (cf. [here](#)) and various interdisciplinary approaches (cf. [here](#) and [here](#)). We pursue this interest actively through choices of symposia, but foremost, we are thrilled to be a platform on which such discourses can take place. It remains our priority to provide a space for discussion and for the testing of new ideas and formats. Everyone is invited to participate!

Völkerrechtsblog – WHAT?

Believe us, we have been thinking about our name, too. Völkerrecht is the common term for international public law in German. It literally translates as “law of peoples”. Granted, the “law of peoples” blog would sound pretty weird (unless you are Rawlsian, maybe). In the beginning, we did not spend too much thought on it, it was the simplest way to call an international law blog that is based in Germany. We were planning to publish both in German and in English. Which we continue to do, and we have added French to our publishing languages. But we have certainly grown more international over the years. This is when the question of name started to come up from time to time. By now, we – and probably many of you – got used to the name, maybe you even practiced the pronunciation. We have no current plans to make those efforts futile, plus, frankly, we like our ö.

Comments and discussion

The aim is to spark a conversation. Our format of original post and reply pursues this aim, and symposia do. Moreover, there is a commenting function – which, however, is not used very much. We wonder why and would appreciate your thoughts. One possible reason is that comments do not become visible immediately but only after approval by a person from the editing team. Usually, this will only take a few minutes or up to two hours. Clearly, the delay can be a disadvantage; we made this choice to filter spam and the potential comments that would violate standards. But there are pros and cons. Furthermore, debate based on blogposts also take place on twitter and facebook – maybe we need to accept that this is easier than the commenting section.

New lustrum, new team

Into our second lustrum, we are starting with an editing team that has almost doubled in size this month. Till now, *Völkerrechtsblog* consisted of a team of around ten editors, complemented by the service team in charge of updates on Call for Papers, Jobs Vacancies etc. (we will introduce the whole team in a separate post tomorrow). Since beginning of April, two student assistants support the work of our team and help us to improve our services for the international law community. Furthermore, in the coming months several new editors will be joining the team, hopefully with fresh ideas and new input. We would like to thank all the members of our team as well as our scientific advisory board who review and edit texts. We are very much looking forward to our next five years, and we can’t wait to have you as our authors and readers.

Raffaella Kunz and Dana Schmalz have been the head of Völkerrechtsblog’s editing team since July 2018. [Raffaella Kunz](#) is Senior Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg. [Dana Schmalz](#) is a deputy professor at Bremen University. You can reach Völkerrechtsblog at editorial-team@voelkerrechtsblog.org.

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